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"Socialidemokraatti"
November 23, 1957
(Summary Translation)

TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

by Tauno Sutinen

Recently there have been lively discussions on the activities of the SAK and its attitude in various circumstances. It has been said that the SAK has given up the decisions made in the meeting at which the organization was founded. It has been said that it has entered a road that will lead to a breaking up of the whole trade union system. This opinion seems justified when one observes the activities of the SAK agents among the unions which have not accepted the recent trend of the SAK, and which have criticized the wage and labor contract policy of the SAK.

The general opinion is that the trade union movement should concentrate its main interest in the management of the workers' wage and collective bargaining contract questions. Recently, however, the SAK leaders have started to support political activities which do not fulfill this purpose and which do not improve the well-being of the trade union members. It seems that the SAK is supporting Agrarian aims and is serving the personal interests of some ambitious individuals. In this way, the SAK is losing the confidence of its members. The founding principle of the SAK was "to promote vocational organization among the workers for improving their economic position, by being an independent organization free from political parties."

It is deplorable that under peacetime conditions it is not possible to guide the organization according to these principles.

In 1946 it was decided that "when acting in the trade union movement the Social Democrats start from the point that the movement can have fighting power only when it can include within its scope all wage earners disregarding party, language and religious opinions. Above all, the organization must be kept independent from political parties."

When we regard the present-day trade union movement and, especially the activity of the central organization, we must admit that there are many defects which are difficult to correct, and that these mistakes have not been made only in the handling of wage questions but also in the use of money collected from the members. There have been attempts to use these funds for purposes which are quite foreign to the trade union movement. Thus it is no wonder that the members are passive and indifferent and that they wish to resign from the organization. But this would not solve the problem. The members should join together still closer, take lively interest in the matters and direct the leaders of the organization to act according to principles approved by the trade union movement, because the power of the trade union movement lies in the number and activity of its members.

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AIR POUCH

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SUBJECT:	Political Activities of SAK Under Attack	Copenhagen-1

A number of articles have appeared recently criticizing the "political activities" of the SAK. The attached article (see Enclosure No. 1) was printed in the SD paper "Sosialidemokraatti" which is controlled by the regular SD Party leadership. The author is Tauno Sutinen, an official of the pro-Lindblom Wood-workers Federation.

Sutinen points out that since its foundation, the SAK has attempted to remain non-political, and that the present trend is therefore contrary to the most basic principles of the Finnish trade union movement. He implies that the membership is losing interest in trade unionism, and that SAK leaders are mismanaging wage negotiations and union funds.

For the Charge d'Affaires a.i.:

Eiler R. Cook
Second Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure:

Summary Translation: Trade Union Movement
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